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ABSTRACT

Providing students with the opportunity to study different cultures increases their global understanding and helps foster tolerance of cultural differences. In this lesson, grade 3-5 students read folk tales from Japan, Wales, and Africa and depict the stories visually for purposes of retelling. Students also research the countries and share a brief synopsis with the class. During four 30-to 35-minute lessons, students will: read cross-cultural folk tales and depict them visually; briefly research countries using the Internet; present folk tales and their research to the class; gain a better understanding about another country and give suggestions for or initiate more in-depth research. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A research form and a story sequence form are attached. (PM)

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Exploring World Cultures Through Folk Tales

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Grade Band

3-5

Estimated Lesson Time

30-to 35-minute sessions for 4 consecutive days

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Overview

This lesson helps foster an atmosphere of tolerance and appreciation for other cultures as students learn and study various folk tales from around the world. Students read and discuss folk tales in small groups and work cooperatively to represent the folk tales visually. Students then research the folk tale's country of origin and present the story and their research to the class.

From Theory to Practice

Leavell, J.A. & Ramos-Machail, N. (2000). Leyendas (legends): Connecting reading cross-culturally. *The Reading Teacher, 54,* 256-258.

- Culturally diverse students now comprise more than 30% of the K-12 population.
- Teachers are more effective when they value and understand children's cultural knowledge. Stories, in all their varied forms (folk tales, legends, proverbs, riddles) are very helpful in this regard.
- Students develop a deeper global understanding and appreciation for cultural differences when they study stories from around the world.

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Read cross-cultural folk tales and depict them visually
- Research world countries using the Internet
- Present folk tales and their research to the class

Resources

- Research form
- Story Sequence form
- EPS Lesson Pack: Folktales from Around the World
- Access to the Internet for student research

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- Poster board, markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Websites for research:
  Peggy's Japan Page
  The World Factbook 2002: Japan
  Kids Web Japan
  PBS: Africa for Kids
  Africa Focus: Sights and Sounds of a Continent
  Africa Online: Kids
  Wales Tourist Board Official Site
  The British Council Wales
  The Castles of Wales

Instructional Plan

Preparation

1. Before beginning this lesson, divide students into three groups and print out enough copies of the EPS Lesson Pack for each group. One of the three folk tales will be assigned to each group.

2. Print out and photocopy the Research form and the Story Sequence form, one copy for each student.

Instruction and Activities

Day 1

1. Divide students into three small groups and pass out a different folk tale to each group. Explain to students that they will be reading folk tales from different countries around the world and sharing them with the class.

2. Discuss the origins of students' families by plotting or pointing out the countries on a map. You may want to record all the countries of student ancestry to illustrate the multicultural aspect of your classroom and our nation.

3. Ask students to read the folk tale aloud in their small groups. Students should work cooperatively as a group and decide on the major events of the story. Each student should then complete his or her own Story Sequence form.

Day 2

1. Divide students into their groups again and have them review the folk tale that they read on Day 1 using the Story Sequence form.

2. Students should begin planning for their presentation of the folk tale to the class. Since none of these folk tales include illustrations, each group will create their own visual interpretation of the story. Illustrations must be drawn on a poster board, but students can decide how the story is best represented visually (e.g., comic strip, collage). Tell students that whatever form they choose, the visual should help the class better understand the story.

3. Have students work cooperatively to complete the project. Each student should have a specific role in the group. If a student is not comfortable drawing, he or she can write captions or volunteer for another task. Allow students to choose their own roles within the group, but encourage each student to identify a specific task to complete.

4. When they are finished creating their visual interpretation, groups should practice retelling the story aloud using the visual they created.

Day 3

1. Pass out the Research form to each student and explain that they will be gathering information about the country where their folk tale originated.

2. Students should use the Internet to complete the Research form. Some helpful websites include:

    - Peggy's Japan Page
    - The World Factbook 2002: Japan
    - Kids Web Japan
    - PBS: Africa for Kids
    - Africa Focus: Sights and Sounds of a Continent
    - Africa Online: Kids
    - Wales Tourist Board Official Site
    - The British Council Wales
    - The Castles of Wales

Day 4

1. Allow small groups to share their graphic illustrations and research with the class. Students should be prepared to give "2 stars and a wish" after each group's presentation. That is, students can volunteer to give 2 positive comments about the presentation and one constructive comment on how the presentation could have been improved. Also allow time for questions and answers.

2. When students are finished sharing, discuss what it was like to learn about another culture and what was the most important thing they learned.

Extensions

To extend these activities, have students look up and define the bolded words in the folk tales. Students can answer the comprehension questions and use the newly learned words in a story. Another idea is to have students write a detailed report about the country they researched, or find and share other folk tales from that country.

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Observe students while working in their small groups to ensure that each student has identified a specific task and is working on that task.
- Be sure the story is accurately retold and that students accurately comprehended the folk tale.
- Assess whether the presentation was clear to the audience.
- Check to be sure that the research and story sequence forms are completed accurately and completely.

IRA/NCTE Standards

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

7 - Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9 - Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

read•write•think

International Reading Association NCTE marcopolo

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Name:_____ Date: _____

Research form

Name of country:

On what continent is the country located?

_____

What is the population?

_____

What is the capital?

_____

List 5 interesting facts you learned about this country.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Story sequence form

Characters:

Major events in story:

Write what happens in the folk tale in the correct order using complete sentences. The first two are started for you.

1.

First,

2.

Next,

3.

4.

5.

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